

National School Lunch Program (NSLP) PRESCHOOL LUNCH MEAL PATTERN

The Healthy and Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 requires the U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to develop new meal patterns for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The current meal pattern for preschoolers in the NSLP remains in effect until the USDA revises the CACFP meal patterns.

Food Components	Minimum Quantities ¹	
	AGES 1-2	AGES 3-4
Fluid Milk ²	6 fluid ounces (¾ cup)	6 fluid ounces (¾ cup)
Vegetables and Fruits Two or more servings of different vegetables or fruits or both ³	½ cup	½ cup
Grains and Breads ⁴ Must be whole grain or enriched A serving is a slice of bread (25 grams or 0.9 ounce) or an equivalent serving of biscuits, rolls and other breads or ½ cup of cooked rice, macaroni, noodles, other pasta products or cereal grains.	5 servings per week ^{4, 5} Minimum of ½ serving per day	8 servings per week ^{4, 5} Minimum of 1 serving per day
Meat and Meat Alternate Lean meat/poultry or fish ⁶ Alternate Protein Products ⁷ Cheese Egg (large) Peanut butter or other nut or seed butters Cooked dry beans and peas Peanuts, tree nuts, soy nuts and seeds ⁸ Yogurt, plain or flavored, unsweetened or sweetened	1 ounce 1 ounce 1 ounce ½ egg 2 tablespoons ¼ cup ½ ounce (50 percent) 4 ounces or ½ cup	1 ½ ounces 1 ½ ounces 1 ½ ounces ¾ egg 3 tablespoons ¾ cup ¾ ounce (50 percent) 6 ounces or ¾ cup

◀ See page 2 for important menu planning notes ▶

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- ¹ The meal pattern shows the minimum amounts of each component that must be made available to each child to claim reimbursement for the meal. Children may be served larger portions but not less than the minimum quantities specified. Use the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) [Food Buying Guide](#) to determine the amount of purchased food that meets the minimum requirements. For processed foods, review [Child Nutrition \(CN\) labels](#) or [product formulation statements](#).
- ² For children ages 3 years and older, schools must offer at least two different varieties (fat content and/or flavor) of unflavored low-fat (1%) or fat-free unflavored or flavored milk. Whole milk must be served to children younger than 2.
- ³ The specified portions must be met with at least two servings of different vegetables and/or fruits, i.e., two servings of different vegetables, two servings of different fruits or one serving of vegetable and one serving of fruit. A minimum of $\frac{1}{8}$ cup must be served to count toward the total requirement. All fruit and vegetable juice must be pasteurized 100 percent full-strength juice and cannot exceed half of the total requirement.
- ⁴ Bread, pasta or noodle products and cereal grains must be whole grain or enriched. Cornbread, biscuits, rolls, muffins and other breads must be made with whole-grain or enriched flour or meal. Bran and germ are credited the same as enriched or whole-grain meal or flour. All grain and bread products must meet the minimum serving sizes specified in [Serving Sizes for Grains/Breads for Preschool Meals in the National School Lunch Program \(NSLP\) and School Breakfast Program \(SBP\)](#). Alternatively, schools can choose to use the minimum ounce equivalents specified in [Whole Grain-rich Ounce Equivalents Requirements for School Nutrition Programs](#). **Note:** The "grains/breads" component of the preschool lunch meal pattern applies only to children ages 1-4. For children ages 5 and older, the NSLP meal pattern applies and the whole grain-rich "grains" component replaces the "grains/breads" component. For more information, see [Criteria for Whole Grain-rich Foods](#).
- ⁵ For the purposes of this chart, a week equals five days. For seven-day weeks, serve 7 servings of grains/breads for ages 1-2 and 11 $\frac{1}{4}$ servings of grains/breads for ages 3-4. For four-day weeks, serve 4 servings of grains/breads for ages 1-2 and 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ servings of grains/breads for ages 3-4. For three-day weeks, serve 3 servings of grains/breads for ages 1-2 and 5 servings of grains/breads for ages 3-4.
- ⁶ Edible portion of cooked lean meat, poultry or fish as served, e.g., cooked lean meat without bone.
- ⁷ Alternate protein products must meet the requirements specified by the USDA in appendix A to Part 210 of the [NSLP regulations](#).
- ⁸ Nuts and seeds that may be used as meat alternates include almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, filberts, macadamia nuts, peanuts, pecans, walnuts, pine nuts, pistachios and soynuts. Nuts and seeds cannot meet more than 50 percent of the meat/meat alternate requirement. They must be combined with another meat/meat alternate to meet the requirement.

For more information, see the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals](#) and the CSDE's [Meal Patterns](#) Web page and [Crediting Foods](#) Web page or contact the [school nutrition programs](#) staff in the CSDE Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education, 25 Industrial Park Road, Middletown, CT 06457.